



LeTourneau
University

Faith brings
us together.
Ingenuity sets
us apart.

"Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." II Cor. 6:2

"One of America's Best Colleges"

WJ

A Spirit that Soars with the Eagles

by Robin Galiano

His gait is noticeably slower than that of other students as he balances his steps with a cane and maneuvers his prosthetic limbs forward. Although his body has been forever altered by several amputation surgeries, his faith, persistence and sense of humor have successfully propelled him through months of physical rehabilitation.

Now, only a year after having survived a case of meningitis that nearly took his life, 22-year-old David Kirkwood is back on campus to complete his double major in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering technology combined with aviation maintenance technology.

While his outward appearance has been distinctly altered, his sense of determination is as strong as ever. "One of the hardest parts for me was knowing that I would not be able to go back to school with my friends in the fall," he says. Kirkwood, who is taking nine credit hours this summer and plans to take 18 hours in fall and spring, hopes to graduate in spring of 1997.

*God will never leave us empty.
If something is taken away,
He will replace it with something better.
If He asks us to put something down,
It is so that we can pick up something greater.*

*God is the great giver.
He is the blessing.
He is the bestower of every
Good and perfect gift. —Roy Lessin*

© "Best To You"



It was on May 31, 1995, that Dave first contracted meningitis, which was characterized by a persistent rash and a fever of 106 degrees. He was taken to a local physician, and the diagnosis was confirmed within a day. Kirkwood was immediately hospitalized, first for a week at Good Shepherd Hospital in Longview and then for two-and-a-half months at Parkland Memorial Hospital's burn unit in Dallas.

Within two weeks of the meningitis diagnosis, Kirkwood underwent his first amputation surgery. The bacterial meningitis had entered and perforated his capillary arteries, resulting in internal bleeding and severe tissue damage. Several times, Kirkwood says, the doctors told his parents that he would probably not live through the night. Kirkwood suffered multiple seizures, and, at times, his blood pressure dropped so low that doctors couldn't read it.

During that time, Kirkwood was semi-conscious, and because his high fever lasted for two months, he suffered some memory loss.

After being released from the hospital in August 1995, he still faced months and months of painful rehabilitation and two more surgeries. When all was said and done, Kirkwood had endured 14 surgeries, four or five of which were for amputation procedures on both of his legs and half of one forearm. A particular frustration for the left-handed Kirkwood was losing that half of his left arm. "I had to learn how to write all over again." In addition, hospital bills had soared to half a million dollars.

The disease also took an emotional toll on Dave. He suffered depression and bouts of self-pity. At first, he was hesitant to even leave the house, fearing the reactionary stares of strangers. His family was his greatest source of support. Dave says that his parents, Bob and Lucy Kirkwood, and older sisters Jan and Nicole never let him give up.

Many others have stepped forward to encourage Dave. He particularly recalled one Christian psychiatrist at Parkland Memorial Hospital who told him, "God won't let anything happen to you that you can't handle." That doctor also quoted Philipians 4:13 to Dave: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

"I finally told myself, okay, Dave, God has obviously allowed this. It's time to buck up and deal with it." "God WILL Never Leave Us Empty," a beautiful poem by Roy Lessin, was deeply encouraging.



Dave Kirkwood

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President's Message

Paying for a LeTourneau Education

It's a familiar story. Almost daily we hear about the ever-rising cost of attending college. Like medical care, the increase in the costs of a college education outstrips the inflation rate. This is true at public universities and community colleges, at independent private colleges, at Christian colleges and at LeTourneau University.

What are some of the factors behind the increases in cost and price? There are five basic factors:

Regulations. Visualize a stack of paper more than two feet high, representing the more than 7,000 regulations that govern federal student aid programs. And that's just the federal regulations. There are state and accrediting agency regulations besides. At LeTourneau, we need the equivalent of three full-time workers to complete all of the records and reports required. LeTourneau does not get direct state or federal tax subsidies, but our students are eligible to receive the federal and state aid available to them, thus requiring our full compliance with these policies.

Infrastructure costs. The cost of water service has more than doubled in the past five years, and all utilities and other day-to-day fixed costs have dramatically increased. Healthcare costs have soared 72 percent in the past five years.

Educational costs. How many books can our library buy for \$40? The answer is "just one." Books and educational materials have increased significantly. Electronic databases, the staple of a modern research library, cost over \$55,000 per year to maintain.

Rising student expectations. Students come to college today with greater expectations for services and equipment. In recent years, we have averaged more than \$100,000 per year to purchase new equipment for our CAD labs, computer labs, office computers, and for the fiber optic loop that links these together and to the Internet. Counseling, career development services, graduate placement, campus security and other similar support services have become a part of every college's programmatic expectation and cost.

Decreasing government aid. At the same time when the costs are rising at a high rate, the federal commitment to financial aid has declined sharply. Average federal awards for grant programs such as Pell Grants and SEOG Grants pay only 14 percent of the education costs, thus widening the gap between the costs of education and the resources available to needy students and their families.

What is LeTourneau doing about this problem?

We run a tight ship. We take our fiscal responsibility seriously and seek to provide top value for what students have to pay. *U.S. News & World Report* recognized this in the *1996 College Guide* by naming us as one of the most efficient colleges in the West.

We invest in our students. Over 80 percent of our students will receive some form of student aid directly from the University. We are very concerned about the rising costs and the availability of funds to help a student attend the University. We recognize that families are faced with a true financial dilemma in choosing a college. While the actual costs of providing an education are approximately the same at the public and private universities of our nation, the public institutions have a significant tax subsidy to help offset their costs and, thereby, offer an attractive option to the student. To aid the student and to help reduce the gap between what families can afford and what it costs, LeTourneau has significantly increased its own financial aid budgets. Next year, LeTourneau will provide over \$2.5 million in institutional aid to our students. This puts a major demand on our fundraising program to help underwrite these costs.

What can you do?

First, understand that the cost of providing quality Christian education is significant. While we are frugal in our operations and seek to be good stewards with our resources, there are many internal and external pressures that continue to push the cost of our programs upward.

Second, encourage the support of state and federal financial aid programs. While we all want to control the cost of government, the support of needy students has proven to be a worthwhile investment in our nation's future, both from a fiscal as well as human resource perspective.

Third, consider investing in the life of a LeTourneau student by providing support for our financial aid program. In recent weeks, two different individuals have begun scholarship programs for needy students at LeTourneau. One was a small initial gift to be added to over the years. Another was a significant gift of appreciated stock. Nor does it have to be an individual effort. Below you'll read about our new aviation scholarship endowment. Our aviation alumni, spearheaded by Steve Erickson (MT/AT '85), Phil Kuitens (AT '84) and Jerry Traphagen (AT '85), are leading the way by establishing this endowment as a way to permanently fund aviation scholarships. Together, they will work to accomplish a great deal. Even if you don't wish to begin a scholarship program, you can make a huge impact by generously responding to our appeals for support of the basic operations of the University. Most of those funds go directly to student aid.

We don't want cost to be a determining factor in a student's choosing a quality, Christ-centered education...but we need your help to make what we have to offer available to future generations of students.

Aviation Alumni to Fund Scholarship

Aviation alumni of LeTourneau University are taking steps to provide financial scholarship support for future aviation students. The Aviation Alumni Association has established and is currently funding a scholarship endowment. The scholarship fund, a component of the Shaping Tomorrow Capital Campaign, will provide an annual income to be given as scholarships to selected LeTourneau aviation students who need financial assistance in order to complete their education. As an endowment, only the income from the account will be used for scholarships, leaving the fund balance to generate income for future awards. Gifts and commitments to date total \$20,475, and the group is discussing additional innovative fundraising ideas.

Gifts to the endowment are welcomed from all aviation alumni and friends of the University. For more information about the scholarship, contact John Martin in the Office of University Advancement.





How to turn \$5,000 into \$180,000

The aviation division's frequent habit of checking out the stock at government surplus centers recently paid off with a valuable find. The division has been able to purchase 10 Allison 250 turbine engines, worth more than \$18,000 each, for only \$500 apiece from a government surplus outlet in Fort Worth.

"These turbine engines are of a type used in a lot of popular helicopters," said Fred Ritchey, director of Aviation Maintenance Technology. "It's been a big need for us to have current technology engines."

Having the engines in the aviation maintenance labs enables the division to do something they haven't been able to do before: give students the opportunity to perform a hot section inspection, the kind of task most often done in industry. Students will learn how to partially disassemble the engines, inspect the section of the engine where the fuel is burned and then reassemble the engines.

"This is realistic of what students might be expected to do in the field," said Ritchey.

The newly-acquired Allison engines will see a lot of use since all LeTourneau aviation majors are required to take the turbines class as part of the aviation maintenance program.

LeTourneau's requirement of having all aviation majors take the aviation maintenance program is different from most other aviation programs in the country, according to Ritchey. "Ours is a more intensive program, with more to learn, but it gives students a big advantage, especially for the pilots."

"Taking the maintenance program allows them to get different FAA ratings," he said. "For instance, they can get the Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic (A&P) Certificate, which makes them more marketable since they understand all the systems in an airplane."



Craig Hamstra, a 1995 graduate, works on an older-style lab turbine. With the addition of 10 new Allison 250 turbines, the Aviation Division will increase the training opportunities for current aviation maintenance students.

Kirkwood—continued from cover

Kirkwood said he also found encouragement by ministering to others in the hospital's and rehabilitation centers, especially one little boy who was blind, yet cheerful and optimistic. "He was always excited to hear me come in for a visit. It kind of put things in perspective for me."

"The LeTourneau community has also been great," Dave commented. Although many of his friends had already graduated during the year he spent in rehabilitation, several of his closest friends have married and still live in the Longview area. He said LeTourneau faculty have been supportive, especially aviation instructors Larry Robinson and Drew Smith. "Some of the A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) mechanical things would be difficult for me now, but these instructors always remind me that before I became ill, I'd already proven that I could do them."

Robinson commented: "Students tell us we're an encouragement to them. I don't know that they realize what an encouragement they are to us. Dave is a real encouragement to all of us. He has a Propulsions III lab final coming up soon, which will be really special. I remember telling him in the hospital — even when he was unconscious — that he still had to come back and take this test. He's just an incredible person. We have so many like him in the aviation program. Each one of them has the potential to have this kind of testimony. He's just the one who was tested."

Before coming back to LeTourneau, Kirkwood completed his rehab program by learning to use his prosthetic limbs. In February 1996 Dave received a prosthesis for his left forearm, and on February 19, he received his prosthetic legs at the Texas Institute for Rehabilitation. At the time, doctors predicted that he would be using a walker for at least six months, but Dave responded in his typically determined way by walking with the help of just crutches within a week. Now he uses only a cane, just for balance.

Kirkwood said his career aspirations have become much more focused in the last year. He hopes to use his engineering technology in the aviation manufacturing industry. His determination in overcoming the results of his illness — including learning to walk efficiently with his prosthetic limbs, and yes, even driving a car — will no doubt carry him through to successfully completing his LeTourneau degree and securing an industry position.

*Through everything, Isaiah
40:29—31 has provided—and will
continue to provide—true hope:
"He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the
weak. Even youths grow tired and
weary, and young men stumble and
fall; But those who hope in the
Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like
eagles; they will run and not grow
weary, they will walk and not
grow faint."*

THE AVIATION DIVISION AT A GLANCE

MAJORS:

Aviation Maintenance Technology (A.S.), Aviation Technology (B.S.) with Automotive/Machinery, Computer Science, Cross-Cultural Studies, Biblical/Cross-Cultural Studies, Business, Design Technology, Electronics or Flight Options.

ENROLLMENT

171 (Spring '96). 80% of the students are in the Aviation Technology/Flight Option program.

LEADERSHIP:

Lauren Bitikoter, Division Chair (1977); Bryan Benson, Director of Flight Training (1979); Fred Ritchey, Director of Aviation Maintenance Technology (1985).

FACULTY:

16 full time faculty and flight instructors.

CERTIFICATION OFFERED:

Private Pilot; Commercial Pilot with Instrument Rating; Flight Instructor; Multi-engine Rating; Aircraft and Powerplant Mechanic.

TRAINING MILES FLOWN

(1995): 1.38 million—equivalent to 57 trips around the world.

FLIGHT EQUIPMENT:

17 training aircraft, 2 Frasca 142 flight simulators, Data Transmission Network and Direct Access User Terminal directly linked to up-to-date weather reports from National Weather Service.

ALUMNI:

Approximately 1,200.

